THE STORY OF BERTIE AND THE COLONEL

By JOHN WORNE

"THIS is too much!" said Eva, with flashing eyes. "I have endured a good deal from you, Mr. Pilkinghame, since we became engaged, but you have gone too far!"

Bertie was overcome with humility and repentance. "If you will tell me what I have done wrong," he said, "I will do anything——"

"You can do nothing but leave me at once!"

"Eva," he pleaded, "have you thought what that would mean? What have I done to deserve it?"

"Can you deny," she said, turning upon him fiercely, "that you proposed to Enid Stafford last night?"

"I did not," he said, firmly. "She proposed to me—practically."

"Oh!" she replied, in exasperation. "Well, you accepted her, then, if you like to put it in that way."

He protested meekly. "I said I'd be delighted to accept her, provided she could arrange the matter with you. You leave out the most important part."

"And—and you think that—you think that is nothing! You imagine I am going to stand——"

"What was a fellow to do?" he asked, raising his shoulders. "It was the first offer I had had—I was naturally a little nervous—I didn't like to be rude to a lady."

She uttered an exclamation of impatience.

"I don't think I had encouraged her attentions," he said; "that wouldn't be right, would it? No. I assure you, I thought it so sudden—so unexpected, I told her so. So we agreed that it wouldn't be right to do anything without consulting you."

"Well, I give you my full permission to marry her."

"I am sorry," he replied. "I was hoping you would put difficulties in the way, tell us to wait a year or—or cut us off, or something of that kind. I trusted to you to put an end to this foolish entanglement." She said nothing. "Well," he went on, "if you really mean it, I suppose it can't be helped. I will go. Eva, Eva, have you considered the misery this means to us both?"

"Thank you," she said frigidly, "I have no doubt that I can console myself. I will accept the first proposal that comes."

"You mean that?"

"Certainly. Do you think that you are the only one free to do as you like?"

"You are very hard upon me. However, good-by."

"Good-by," she said. He had reached the door. "I think you have forgotten the ring," she said, laying it on the table.

He came back and took it up. He looked at her pathetically, but she had seated herself and taken up a novel. He went out, closed the door and was gone. Standing in the street, he reflected a moment, wondering what to do to fill up the time before lunch. He finally hailed a hansom and drove to one of his seventeen clubs. In the smoke room he found the colonel writing a letter to the "Times." The colonel was the most shocking bore ever known. He had proposed to Eva before her engagement to Bertie, and even that he had done in an insufferably dull way. His favorite occupation was hearing early cuckoos, and he knew all the arguments against free trade. He had a good heart and meant well.

Bertie went up to him and said in a husky voice, "I congratulate you, sir."

The colonel looked up. "Ah, good morning."

Bertie took his hand and shook it solemnly. "I congratulate you, sir," he repeated.

"Eh?" said the colonel. "Oh, ah, yes! —that article on 'Gladstonian Fallacies.' Yes; I flatter myself that it has its merits, eh? Now, would you believe it" —he pressed a forefinger between Bertie's ribs—"they weren't going to put it in; fact is, I had quite a difficulty——"

"I didn't mean that, though I entirely agree with what the article said—every word of it," he added firmly, for the colonel seemed about to speak. "What I meant was—oh, but you must know!"

The colonel shook his head. Bertie looked around, saw that nobody was within hearing and lowered his voice. "I have just seen Miss Rowen." He stopped. The colonel was still puzzled. "From what I gathered she had been reading that article—over your signature."

"I didn't sign it."

"I mean she had recognized the style at once—one can't help doing that." The colonel nodded and beamed. "I found her cold toward me; I tried to get an explanation; I soon found that I was in a false position."

"Bless my soul!" said the colonel, becoming very red in the face.

Bertie's voice broke. "I felt bound to release her from her engagement," he said. "I—I congratulate you, sir."

"I'm—I'm very sorry for you," gasped the colonel, decently concealing his blissful rapture. "I—er—I assure you—bless my soul—dear, dear! this is most remarkable!"

"No," said Bertie; "never mind me. I ought to have known from the first that my case was hopeless against a man who could write like that upon—upon—er—the subject of that article."

"Bless my soul!" repeated the colonel, dazed; "I must—I must go home and consider this; this is most important." He tore up the letter he had been writing. "I am much obliged to you—indeed I am! I—er—can't say how sorry I feel for you. I—er——"

"Four o'clock was the time she said she would be home."

"Bless my soul! Four this afternoon! Dear, dear! Good morning!"

He hurried out with a light step, muttering to himself. Bertie settled down for a few minutes with a paper. It was not long before Lord Bobby Dalmainham strolled in for his customary after-breakfast light reading. He greeted Bertie cheerily. Bertie looked at him with a cold stare, rose and walked toward the door.

"Hullo!" said Lord Bobby, with a blank face. "What's happened now? What have I been doing this time?" They were alone in the room. Bertie turned and faced him.

"Do you ask that question of me?" he said, indignantly. "And you are the man I used to think of as a friend I could trust!"

Lord Bobby whistled low.

"You'll understand," said Bertie, "that it is quite impossible for our acquaintance to continue."

"Why on earth——?" asked Lord Bobby.

"I leave that to your own conscience."

"But I assure you on my honor, my dear fellow, I haven't the ghost of a notion what the deuce we're talking about."

"What's the good of pretending like this?" said Bertie.

"If you'd give me a hint," said Lord Bobby; "anything to help me out. I never was clever."

"Well," said Bertie, bitterly, "you'll be glad to hear that I'm no longer engaged to Miss Rowen."

"I'm most awfully sorry, old man; but what——?"

"None of your crocodile tears, please. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I extracted from her the fact that this is just what you and she have been longing for for months past."

"By Jove!" said Lord Bobby, his face lighting up. "She said she had been longing——"

"She owed me some explanation for the change in her feelings toward me. I soon found that a visit from somebody was hoped for at 4 this afternoon, and it didn't take long to find out who that somebody was. And this is your gratitude to the man who saved your life!"

"My dear fellow, I—I can't say how sorry I am for you; but it's the fortune of war, you know. Four o'clock, did you say? Each man for himself, you know, and somebody does the rest." Lord Bobby did not say this exultantly, but in a gentle tone, by way of consolation.

"You may be right," said Bertie, sadly, "and I dare say it isn't your fault. Who would have expected her to fall in love with you?"

"It certainly is bad luck, old man," said Lord Bobby. "I shouldn't like it if I were you. Well, I'm off—thanks for telling me!"

"Be punctual!" Bertie called out, as he left the room. He then wandered round looking for men who were acquainted with Eva. He found no more, so he drove off to another club, and there, also, was the cause of much happiness in three bosoms. The Hon. Percy Fitzpearce was at first considerably astonished, but on reflection (looking-glass reflection) he quite understood how it came about. Archie Pawling, though he had not, as a matter of fact, contemplated matrimony for some time yet, saw lying before him an opportunity of getting rid of his creditors which was not likely to occur again; while Phil Bartram had suspected something of the kind long ago. They were all sympathetic and they all determined to be punctual.

Bertie then lunched and debated with himself the advisability of leaving town for a few days.

At half-past three it was raining, and Eva decided to stay at home. She was feeling dull and had been half inclined to find out from Enid Stafford what had really happened in the matter of that proposal of marriage. Perhaps, after all, they didn't mean it seriously. Somehow, it seemed rather a small thing to be the cause of a separation forever. She was dreaming, half-regretfully, of the happy past, when, at five minutes to four, John looked in.

"Colonel Cush is at the door, Miss. Shall I say 'Not at home?'"

"Oh, bother! Yes. No; wait a minute. You haven't opened the door yet?"

"No miss."

She thought it was well to be polite to the Colonel; he was an old friend of Mr. Rowen.

"You may say we're at home; and go and ask Mrs. Rowen to come quick. And if anybody else comes—I don't suppose anybody will—you can let them in at once."

It was well to be fortified by numbers against the Colonel. He entered, radiant, but uncertain as to the exact thing to be done. However, a little earnest pressure of the hand was enough to begin with. She didn't return it. But how could she until after he had declared himself? He began on the subject which formed the golden link between them.

"So you admire 'Gladstonian Fallacies?'"

"Awfully," she murmured, "don't you?"

She resigned herself to fate, and wondered how soon help would arrive. It came sooner than she expected.

John opened the door and Lord Bobby entered with a rush and a happy smile. But the rush was checked and the smile froze. He shook hands with Eva with a look full of meaning and sympathy, and nodded stiffly to the Colonel. The Colonel glared at him, and gave Eva a glance which was to make her understand that he felt the infliction as much as she did. Lord Bobby sat down, and, having come prepared with only the one subject of conversation, said nothing for some time. The Colonel proceeded to explain one or two points in "Gladstonian Fallacies," and wondered how long the young ass was going to stay. It was one of the Colonel's failings that he never realized that things once of great interest become out of date.

John soon admitted in quick succession the Hon. Percy Fitzpearce, Mr. Archie Pawling, and Mr. Phillip Bartram. He was a little surprised to find that each murmured that he was expected. Each entered with a gladsome step and a hopeful countenance, stopped suddenly, and looked around in disgust. Each pressed her hand in sympathy. She wondered much.

The conversation that afternoon was interesting, not so much by the reason of the things said as by reason of the things thought and choked down in silence. The colonel's few remarks on "Gladstonian Fallacies" developed, as they were apt to do, into a set speech, while Eva murmured at intervals her entire agreement. Lord Bobby also concurred with enthusiasm and said he was surprised that the question could ever be disputed; but that did not check the flow of oratory. When Mrs. Rowen came in there was some exciting maneuvering by each to drive the other four over to her and get a few words quietly with Eva; it was as interesting as the ten minutes before the gun fires in a yacht race. As 5 o'clock approached each watched furtively for signs of the departure of the others. No gentleman who is a gentleman should make a call of more than an hour. Lord Bobby mentioned thrilling things that were going on elsewhere, and Archie Pawling asked why he wasn't there. Lord Bobby remarked casually that he didn't care for such things. Mr. Fitzpearce remembered an engagement that Mr. Bertram had, but Mr. Bertram thanked him kindly and said it had been postponed. The colonel was engaged in annihilating only the third fallacy of Mr. Gladstone, and there were seven still to be dealt with, three of which were most outrageously fallacious. And Eva wondered more and more.

Each of them took a fourth cup of tea and sipped it cautiously, with an eye on the cup of his neighbor. Mrs. Rowen started off on the sixteenth subject of conversation, and for the ninety-second time Mr. Fitzpearce said ponderously that it was awfully jolly. Each, whenever he got a chance, looked into Eva's eyes with a look that meant unutterable worlds.

At about 5:30 Lord Bobby began asking riddles, such as, "If a fish weighs ten pounds and one-half its own weight what does it weigh?" or "Why is a mouse when it spins?"; but they bore it with grim fortitude. Nobody fled. Then came one of those ghostly silences which make one glance instinctively at the clock. At about 5:30 Mr. Pawling, with many "Ha, ha's!" and earnest assurances that he had never laughed so much in his life, told a story, but remembered in the middle that it might not do in a drawing room, and had to switch off into something with a moral, but no meaning. Eva laughed very much; in fact, she felt that, on the slightest provocation, she would scream. She wondered if her parting from Bertie was known and this was the penalty for being disengaged. Poor Bertie! There was a halo round him already. Her replies to the colonel (who was really enjoying himself) were getting further and further from the point, and the others noticed it, and pitied her and raged. It was becoming quite obvious that, if anybody ever went away at all (which seemed doubtful) the warrior would be the last to leave his post. She had never realized so fully before what dull dogs were the gentlemen of her acquaintance. Poor Bertie! How different the afternoon would have been had he been there! Even Lord Bobby was without his usual sprightliness, and was gloomily stirring his spoon around in the half-cup of cold tea which would nevermore be empty. His replies to the colonel were becoming abrupt, even snappy. At about 5:45, however, he saw a chance. The colonel had rashly turned away for a moment to impress upon Percy Fitzpearce (whose chin was sinking deeper into his collar) the absurdity of the argument that because the Irish church——

"I'm as much annoyed about this," said Lord Bobby, softly, "as you are."

Eva looked surprised. "Did I look annoyed?"

"No, of course; but it is exasperating that these fellows should choose this particular time to come and do this, you know."

"This particular time?" she asked, puzzled.

"What astonishes me," he said, "is the way they can't see that we don't want them." He lowered his voice to a tender whisper. "Bertie has told me all about it."

"Has he?" said Eva, not at all pleased; it was the first time Bertie had been in such a hurry to announce the end.

"Yes, he told me, so it can't be helped now. You must try to forgive him. Poor fellow, he was awfully cut up about it all."

"It is very good of you to take his part like this."

"Oh, I can afford to, can't I? One can be generous to the vanquished." He paused, and then went on earnestly. "After what you know I know, is it necessary for me to tell you that——"

"Well, Miss Rowen, let me recapitulate briefly the last two points I made," said the colonel, turning his back to her.

She sighed and looked at the clock. She had an uncomfortable feeling that something was happening which she didn't understand, and even the colonel's arguments were a relief after the mysterious solemnity of Lord Bobby. Oh, where was Bertie? Bertie could have saved her from all this! With something like terror she saw Percy Fitzpearce move himself sideways on to a chair near to her. A message of great import was in his eye, so she devoted all her attention to the colonel, but heard Percy's voice murmuring, "Confounded nuisance these fellows staying on like this, eh?"

She thought she could answer that. Yes, isn't it?" she said, heartily, and he glowed with satisfaction.

Pawling and Bartram watched this maneuver, and were racking their brains to devise a method of leaving Mrs. Rowen without rudeness and crossing to Eva. Each was sorely grieved to see her thus bored by the others when he knew that all the afternoon the poor girl had been yearning for one word from himself. It occurred to Eva that they were all fishing for an invitation to dinner; but the thing was so unlikely. All the little customary hints, such as "Dear me, how time does fly!" or "Oh, don't go yet!" had long ago been used up, and direct attacks seemed only to confirm the individual attacked in his intention of remaining. And wherever she looked she met eyes fixed upon her with melting tenderness. It was like some hideous nightmare. And the colonel had only reached his seventh fallacy, with home rule still to come. Oh, Bertie, Bertie! why did you go away?

It was getting on toward 6:30 when John entered and announced Mr. Bertie Pilkinghame. Her heart leaped and she rose and went toward him. The colonel and Lord Bobby and the Hon. Percy Fitzpearce and Mr. Pawling and Mr. Bartram showed considerable surprise.

Bertie looked around with a grave face. Then he shook hands first with Eva, then with Mrs. Rowen, and then with the heroic five. He had a pleasant word for each. Then he returned to Eva, sat down on a sofa by her side, and, without saying anything, looked solemnly at the colonel. The astonishment on five faces changed to wrath and disgust, and that in turn gave way to pleasant though grim smiles. With regret they realized that in a lady's drawing room physical violence was out of the question.

"Er-ah-ahem!" said the colonel, feeling his position acutely. "Bless my soul, how late it is! Dear, dear! How one forgets time! I—I am afraid I must be going now, really."

"Must you really?" said Mrs. Rowen.

"Er—I really must—er——. Good afternoon!"

"Good night," said Eva; and the colonel hurried out, jammed his hat on his head and slashed at things with his umbrella all the way home.

The same process was repeated four times. But the four did not go straight home. There was a council of war out on the pavement.

"Let's thrash him," said Pawling savagely.

"Yes," said Bartram, gripping his stick.

"And have it all made public and look bigger fools than we are," said Fitzpearce.

"If possible," said Lord Bobby; and in mournful silence they dispersed.

"I didn't hear you come," said Eva when the room was cleared.

"Didn't you?" said Bertie. As a matter of fact he had arrived at 4 and sat in the library while John reported how things were going. "I came because I had heard that you were about to accept the first proposal you got. In case I'm not too late," he continued, going down gracefully on one knee, "I have the honor to lay at your feet the heart and hand of a most humble, repentant and devoted slave, trusting that the errors of the past may be but the more convincing proof of the certainty of a blameless future."

"Did you tell all—all—those people to come here?"

"I told them our engagement was over."

"Well," she said, shuddering, "you must never do such a thing again."

"Darling, I never will."

The wounds in four bosoms healed with time, but the colonel never spoke to Bertie again.

And in after years, when people heard that this was so, they came to Bertie and said wistfully, "Tell us, oh, tell us how you managed it."—New York Press.

THE MODERN TAMING OF THE SHREW

By M. L. RAYNE.

EVELYN MASTERS was an heirloom in her family. I do not mean in point of age, but on account of being burdened with the sins of her fathers and embodying in herself all the traditions handed down to her from generation to generation. She had the misfortune to be an only child, and it was of her the story was related that when a caller asked how many children were in the family she answered "two." When her mother took her to task for the untruth she retorted with spirit:

"I hated to have anyone think you were so poor you could only have one child."

The mother of Evelyn Masters was bound by an environment of tradition and heredity, but the girl, more fortunate, was handicapped by only one ancestor, the black sheep of the family. Her parents made no effort to break the rigid lines of this degenerate succession by studying the recurrence of types of humanity born to every generation and giving them new environment, and so perpetuated the handicap. Physically Evelyn was near perfection; there had been no record of such beauty in the family, but none of her graces was her own. They wore the ancestral label always.

"She has her grandmother's eyes," her mother would assert.

"And her Uncle Tom's temper," the father would retort.

"I wonder who she takes after for her curly hair? Yours and mine is straight enough."

"Why, you know your brother Tom's hair curled in rings all over his head. I've heard your mother say it always curled tight before——"

"Before it rained?"

"No, before a fit of temper."

They never took into account the fact that this only child had not been subject to any disciplinary methods, or that change of venue is one of the triumphal offshoots of old rigid laws, or that her brief madness of anger was kept alive by the genealogical attention it received. Her parents feared to cross her disposition, because in her fits of temper as a child she would throw herself on the carpet and pound her head on the floor until she was given her own way, and they were alarmed lest she should do herself serious injury. Besides, in a fit of rage her Uncle Tom had killed a man.

Evelyn Masters grew into a fine young woman and married a promising man, whose mother was of the Madonna type, but although she had strains of a varied ancestry, she had learned to put the old Adam under her feet. The son, Franklin Vincent, was a rising lawyer in touch with his times, looking forward, not backward, and he had no respect for old musty lines of tradition except as illustrations of modern progress. He loved and admired his wife, but although he had been told of her erratic temper, he had never seen her in one of her ebullitions of wrath until they had been married six months or more. When the tempest broke he was appalled at its violence, hurt and shamed for her whom he had made his model of all womanly virtues. His self-respect was wounded and a righteous anger aroused in his own heart. He closed a long and carefully guarded remonstrance with these words:

"You can control your temper if you choose, Evelyn. You lack poise, self-control, concentration of purpose. The fact that you have controlled your temper for six months shows that if you make the effort you can succeed. You do not fly into fits of such awful passion in company; how do you manage then?"

"Would you like to know?" asked his wife with flashing eyes, her cheeks flaming, the tears hanging on her beautiful lashes. "Well, I will tell you, Frank. Do you remember the time my hands were lacerated and I let you think the scars were burns? I had bitten them through flesh and bone to relieve the horrible tension of my feelings."

"And some day you will kill a man?"

"Yes. That is what Uncle Tom did, and I have his temper."

"Nonsense, Evelyn. Don't quote your Uncle Tom to me, now or ever again. You have your own temper, and as a matter of fact heredity does not run in such lines of consanguinity. You have only to exercise your will to effect a cure. You are the slave of a mental habit."

The next day Mrs. Vincent went home to her parents. But her husband loved her too well to give her up in that fashion and he followed her and effected a reconciliation. They made a little tour together and spent a few days in Washington, where an uncle of Mr. Vincent lived, a doctor and a noted scientist, who had made some wonderful recent discoveries in the science of mind. The nephew had paid little attention to them, looking on them as new fads rather than as scientific facts. He was more interested over his uncle's first meeting with his charming young wife, but by some mischance or awkwardness he stepped on her handsome gown at the moment of introduction and ruined the lace flounce, which was one of her treasured possessions. She did not try to stop the torrent of her anger, and Dr. Gates was appalled by the intensity of invective which fell from the most beautiful lips he had ever seen.

Laying his hand upon her arm, gently but firmly, he said:

"Breathe into this tube."

The tone of command silenced her. Trembling with the force of her anger she demanded:

"What do you mean? I am not a victim of any disease."

"Oblige me, young lady, by breathing into this tube," he persisted.

"Please him, Evelyn," suggested her husband, who began to see the light of a new thought.

The tube was like a spotless mirror. After a second of hesitation Mrs. Vincent breathed into it, following the directions given by Dr. Gates. She thought it was a lungtester of some new invention. After she had breathed into it—a heaving, stormy breath of passion—he asked her to look again and tell him what she could see.

"My breath has clouded it—there seems to be a dark brown substance gathered there; dark and ugly looking—what is it?"

"That is an accumulation of anger, so acrid and venomous that if I gave that minute portion to my dog it would kill him as instantly as the most deadly poison on my shelves."

"I—don't—believe—it," gasped Evelyn. There was danger of another explosion.

"I will prove it," said the doctor. "Come here, Bozzie, I am going to sacrifice you in the cause of science and humanity." And taking out the slide he gave the residuum to his faithful dog. In a few seconds the animal reeled and fell, struggling wildly. It was more than Evelyn could bear.

"Save it, save the poor dog," she cried. "Give an antidote and save its life. Oh, what was there in my breath to cause death? Oh, this is frightful!"

"I quite agree with you," said Dr. Gates calmly, ringing for an attendant, to whom he gave some directions, ordering the dog removed. Then he continued: "That is the poison of anger which remains in your system, producing disease and death. I have spent years on this discovery, and find similar results from fear, hate and jealousy. I have proved to the satisfaction of the world of science that people are as poisonous as animals in their paroxysms of fury."

Franklin Vincent and his wife spent a week with their uncle, a blessed week, Uncle Gates proving a sure antidote for Uncle Tom.

NOTHING NEW.

Ascum—I suppose you took in all the automobile exhibits while you were abroad?

Skawcher—O, of course.

Ascum—What's new in the way of autos over there?

Skawcher—Nothing. Just the same old pedestrians, pigs, chickens, and things that we have here.—Philadelphia Press.

Woman's Work in the Agricultural Field

A SHORT journey from London brings one to the Horticultural College, where women as well as men may learn not only the art of gardening, but nearly all that pertains to agriculture. The college, which was founded in 1899, is situated in the sunniest part of Kent, in the heart of the fruit growing district. It consists of a fine old mansion, part of it going back to the days of Elizabeth, standing in forty-three acres of land.

The ground consists of twelve acres of kitchen garden, two of flower garden, seventeen of fruit plantations and several fields. The buildings include glass houses, farm buildings, stables, workshops, apiary, dairy, poultry houses, lecture rooms, laboratories, etc. When the college was first started only men were taken, but two years ago women appeared on the scene, and now they considerably outnumber the men.

In the flower garden, beside the college buildings, the processes of planting, potting, hoeing, watering and so on are in full operation. Close by are the students' own gardens. Here individual tastes have full scope. Some of the gardens are charming, while others are severely utilitarian in character. But all of them showed that their owners were in earnest, and were putting genuine work into them.

The glass houses form another notable feature at the college. One or two are devoted to tropical plants—and this section is about to be greatly enlarged—but the greater portion are devoted to tomatoes, cucumbers, peaches, and the like. Two fine vineries yield a large crop.

Some of the woman students have tried their hands at mowing in the hayfield, but it was found that the work of swinging the scythe was too much for them.

Dairy work occupies an important part in the curriculum, while the preserving of fruit and making of pickles are not forgotten. Attention is also paid to table decoration, as well as to packing fruit and flowers for the market. It should be pointed out that in every particular the men and women students pursue the same course of instruction.

Men learn to make jelly and arrange flowers, while the women dig trenches, prepare forcing beds, and master the intricacies of land surveying. In addition to the practical work in the gardens and on the farm, a good share of the students' time is occupied with lectures and with laboratory research.

All students entering must be over sixteen years of age and possess satisfactory references. The inclusive fee of £80 is charged, and the course extends over two years.

AWAITING HIS TIME

By MABEL A. RUNDELL

"OH, no, Dr. Hudson, I beg you not to say it. You must not!"

Miss Cartwright, in her superintendent's white uniform, stood facing the doctor in the great bare office of the Emergency Hospital. Her hand trembled as she rested it on the desk at her side, but the man saw no signs of agitation. He was conscious only that this slender woman was looking unfalteringly into his eyes and that by the tone of her voice she was filling him with the numbness of despair. Was it sheer force of will, or was it utter lack of emotion that kept the face which confronted him so calm?

Dr. Hudson knew that his own face kept its professional mask, though he breathed like a man who had been running. A white-capped nurse glanced in at the door and slipped away before he spoke again.

"It is quite useless to ask me to be silent now. When a man has lived to be forty he doesn't give up easily the first woman he has ever loved. It is three years since I first saw you, coming down the corridor toward me, your hair like an aureole around your head, three years that I have loved you and have been silent."

Miss Cartwright's lips opened. "But I have not——"

"No you have not. I have had no reason to think you could care for me. You have always been thoroughly professional," and he smiled. "It is just that. The strain of this life is killing you. I know so well what it is. I wanted to take you out of it."

He turned away from her to the window, where a dreary March rain beat against the glass. A little brown bird, with drenched wings, fluttered up on the ledge, and finding no shelter from the storm, flew off against the wind.

Dr. Hudson went on bitterly: "It is a fitting name they have given you—'Moonlight. Lady Moonlight.' It is what you are; cold and pale and beautiful—to drive men mad!"

The woman drew in her breath sharply. "I have told you that this hurts me, hurts me deeply. You have been my good friend, but now—you are cruel!"

"Forgive me! I do not mean to be!" He crossed to her quickly, putting his firm, warm hand over her cold one that rested on the desk, and looked straight into her eyes. "Will you tell me that you do not love me?"

The red left her lips, but she faced him dauntlessly. "I have told you that I cannot marry you."

"That is not my answer. If the time ever comes when you can love me, when you do love me, will you come to me and tell me?"

She spoke hurriedly for the first time. "You have no right—how should I know that you——?"

"You will know, and you will tell me. Promise!"

They looked at each other a long moment, his strength against hers, then her eyes fell.

"Yes!" she said it breathlessly; "yes, I will!"

He turned and left her without looking back.

Two months later the hospital attendants brought a stretcher through the great doors and down the hall. Upon it lay the huddled and apparently lifeless form of a man, with bandaged head. Miss Cartwright, crossing the corridor, caught sight of the patient's death-white face, and her own grew whiter still.

"No, not the public ward; bring him in here!" and she threw open the door of a private room.

The men looked their amazement at her strange tone and the unusual command.

"Miss Morse"—to a nurse who had entered—"send Dr. Hudson to me at once. He is making the rounds. You need not come back."

The men followed the nurse from the room and closed the door. When Dr. Hudson opened it a few moments later Miss Cartwright turned toward him a face whose wild appeal startled him into an exclamation.

"Helen!"

Her fingers were on the man's pulse. "He is alive! he is! But it can't be long. I know it can't. We must rouse him. He must be conscious. Quick! Every moment means so much. You don't know."

Dr. Hudson was working and she was helping him, steadily and capably, even while she was speaking in that high, tense voice.

At last the man's heavy eyelids fluttered feebly, settled again, then quivered once more, and lifted reluctantly, while the bloodshot eyes rested on Miss Cartwright's face, bent close to his.

"Marvin!" she cried, for the eyes were closing again. "Marvin, look at me. It's Helen. You remember. Think! Helen! Helen!" She repeated the name with a ringing cadence, as if it were a talisman to call him back from the dead. And the dull eyes lost their sightless look; intelligence struggled into them; the dry lips moved; the words were almost inaudible.

"Yes—yes, it is. Where did you come from? I thought I'd finished it this time. I meant to. I wanted to see you, though. That's why I came back. I couldn't find you. I didn't mean you should see me."

Miss Cartwright's eyes were burning. "Marvin, listen. You must tell me the truth, all the truth, quickly, about the bank—the money. Father killed himself—shot himself. Did you know it? Suspicion fell on him and you were gone. You never knew—he never said a word. They found him dead. What should I believe? What could I think? My father and my lover! All these years—ten years. Marvin—never to know—and I loved you then."

The color had been creeping into the man's face. He tried to rise on his elbow, but fell back.

"Before God, Helen, I never knew! I've been where no news ever came. I took the money. I never meant to. And then I had to go. I never thought any one else—your father—would bear the blame. I loved you all the time. I wasn't so bad. God knows I've been bad enough since. But I had to come back. I wanted to see you once—just once—and then end it." The words were coming in gasps, the eyes closed, then opened again with an expression of piteous entreaty.

"Helen, you look like an avenging angel. I can't ask you to forgive me, but I did love you. I've loved you—all the—while."

Over Helen Cartwright's face flashed a marvelous, tender pity, and the swift tears dropped upon the forehead, across which the grayness of death was stealing. The man's eyes opened and looked into her's, then closed again; a short panting breath; a shudder—and quiet.

Miss Cartwright sank face down upon the edge of the bed. She was so still that Dr. Hudson, standing by the window, thought she had fainted, but he did not move. The warm May sunshine flooded the room, falling upon the pure glory of her hair and upon the man's ghastly, world-worn face. Sparrows on the edge of the roof twittered contentedly. The shrill peal of a child's laughter floated up from the street.

Suddenly, she rose, and, going swiftly to Dr. Hudson put both her hands in his, looking at him with luminous eyes.

He bent his head questioningly, unbelievingly.

"Moonlight, my Lady Moonlight, is it now?"

"Yes;" she scarcely breathed it, but he heard, "it is now."

THE OUTLAW.

Oh, let my lord laugh in his halls
When he the tale shall tell!
But woe to Jariwell and its walls
When I shall laugh as well!
And he that laughs the last, lads,
Laughs well, laughs well.

He's lord of many a burg and farm
And mickle thralls and gold,
And I am but my own right arm,
My dwelling place the wold.
But when we twain meet face to face,
He will not laugh so bold.

The shame he chuckles as he shows
This time he need not tell;
I'll give his body to the crows,
And his black soul to Hell.
For he that laughs the last, lads,
Laughs well, laughs well!

—Richard Hovey.